

# **National Teach-In on the Vietnam War**

**May 15, 1965**

**9 am – Midnight**

## **PROGRAM**

**Sheraton Park Hotel  
Washington, D. C.**

**minimum donation requested: \$2.00**

**registration required at teach-in desk**



The National Teach-in is a critical response by a large part of the intellectual community to American policy in Vietnam. Its focus is on the actions of our country in Vietnam and on the process of decision-making in foreign affairs. It is an examination of the assumptions and goals underlying those actions. It is an exploration of policy alternatives. It is a call for reason.

The format of the teach-in is one of balanced discussion, confrontation and debate with the government and its supporters from the academic world. Our aim is to raise issues and to bring to bear the expertise residing in the intellectual community. Our commitment is to urge whatever changes of policy seem reasonable after full discussion.

The organization of the Teach-in has brought together a wide range of critical viewpoints: some whom recent events have left concerned and doubting, others whose disagreements with the government have more to do with the appropriateness of means than ultimate goals, and yet others for whom this war has produced a much more fundamental moral and intellectual disaffection with American policy and its policy makers.

For all these people, the Teach-in is seen as a necessary extension of the intellectual's responsibility as a teacher and seeker of truth. The search for knowledge must not be fettered by Government attempts to still dissent and create an aura of unanimity; the results of the search must be made relevant to the ongoing process of decision-making in Washington. We assert our duty, as intellectuals and as citizens, to question American policy. We assert our obligation, in a time of crisis, to bring before the nation and the world our doubts about the wisdom and morality of the American position, our fears that a hardened military policy may be leading the world to the brink of nuclear war.



PROGRAM: NATIONAL TEACH-IN ON THE VIETNAM WAR  
May 15 Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington D. C.

9:00 - 12:30 Speeches

moderator: Eric Wolf (University of Michigan)  
The origin of the National Teach-in. Its purposes. The responsibility of the intellectual community in matters of public policy.

The Government Position in Vietnam. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (Harvard University) (40 min.)

Critique of the American position in Vietnam: Hans Morgenthau (University of Chicago) (40 min.)

The Policy context of the Cold War: (40 min.)  
Isaac Deutscher (London, England)

questions

2:00 - 5:00 Policy Confrontation

moderator: Ernest Nagel (Columbia University)  
The questions of the confrontation

Criticisms of the present policy in Vietnam (30 min.)  
George Kahin (Cornell University)

Statement of the administration position (30 min.)  
McGeorge Bundy (Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs)

Response from the critical panel:

- 1 Hans Morgenthau (University of Chicago)
- 5 Mary Wright (Yale University)
- 7 Stanley Millet (Briarcliff College)
- 3 William A. Williams (University of Wisconsin)

Response from supporting panel:

- 8 Wesley Fishel (Michigan State University)
- 2 Zbigniew Brzezinski (Columbia University)
- 4 Robert Scalapino (University of California)
- 6 Michael Lindsey (American University)

Questions from the panels to the speakers and cross questioning between the panels. Questions from audience to speakers.



7:30 - 10:30 Seminars examining the major propositions of the United States policy in Vietnam based on President Johnson's speech of April 7 at Johns Hopkins University.

(Speakers and rooms to be announced)

- 1) "The first reality is that North Vietnam has attacked the independent nation of South Vietnam. Its object is total conquest." — The realities of North Vietnam.
- 2) "Over this war is another reality: the deepening shadow of Communist China. . . The contest in Vietnam is part of a wider pattern of aggressive purpose." — The issue of Chinese expansionism.
- 3) "Let no one think that retreat from Vietnam would bring an end to conflict. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another." — The "domino theory" in Southeast Asia.
- 4) "We have helped to build and we have helped to defend. We want only that the people of South Vietnam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way." — The United States record in South Vietnam.
- 5) "Of course some of the people of South Vietnam are participating in attack on their own Government. But trained men and supplies, orders and arms, flow in a constant stream from North to South. This support is the heartbeat of the war." — The dual questions of "civil war" and "aggression from the North."
- 6) "We will not be defeated." — Can this war be won?
- 7) "The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied." — An overview of United States military policy.
- 8) "We are there to strengthen world order . . . (and) to help South Vietnam defend its freedom." — The political and moral effects of American policy.

Format for Evening Seminars: a moderator and a panel of four: two supporting the government's position and two critical of the government's position.



moderator: Statement of the proposition of the seminar and the content of the topic area. Summary of the government position and of the major critical arguments and alternative perspectives. (15 min.)

panel: response to the moderator's statement, qualifying, adding to, or taking exception to his definition of the issues or his identification of the principal arguments. (35 min.)

audience: questions to the panel or statements from the audience. The panelists have the prerogative to yield questions to additional resource people in the audience. (75 min.)

moderator: summary of the discussion and focus on the outstanding issues. (10 min.)

audience: questions and statements from the audience. (30 min.)

panel: summary of the argument and concluding assessment of the seminar "proposition" as a valid component of American policy.

7:30 - 10:30 Panel and general discussion on the making of American foreign policy: a panel of three administration critics, three supporters and a moderator.

Topic description: The separation of powers. The effects of the war on American democracy. The intellectual history of the State Department. The theoretical and real role of the Congress in shaping foreign policy. Relations between the Congress and the Executive. The role of the military in shaping foreign policy. The availability and reliability of information to policy makers. The availability of information to the people. The influence of the climate of the Cold War. Mechanisms for holding the government responsible and accountable for its conduct of foreign policy. Restrictions of free debate in time of "national emergency."



## Format of evening panel:

Opening statements by the panelists (30 min.)

Cross questioning among the panelists (30 min.)

Statements and discussion from the floor (60 min.)

Summary by moderator (10 min.)

Further statements and discussion from the floor (20 min.)

Summary statements by panelists or resource people on the floor (30 min.)

## 10:45 - 12:00 Alternatives to present policy

An ad hoc panel, selected from the moderators and participants of the seminars and evening panel, describing three or four approaches to the Vietnam situation that can serve as reasonable alternatives to the present administration policy. Administration spokesmen will be asked to comment on each of these alternative approaches.

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The afternoon policy confrontation will be broadcast nationwide through a network of more than 100 community and university teach-ins, protest meetings and radio stations.

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The teach-in movement on Vietnam began at the University of Michigan on March 24, 1965, when 3000 people participated in an all night session of speeches, seminars and rallies. The teach-in provided university people, within their professional roles as scholars, teachers and students, with an opportunity to address fundamental issues of public policy. More than 50 other universities have had teach-ins since that time. The National Teach-in is an outgrowth and focusing of this local movement. It is also, through the network of simultaneous local meetings, the beginning of an expanded effort to confront the passivity of the public in the face of actions which the government carries on in their name.



## FUND APPEAL

"The democratic man assumes the existence of a public, and in his rhetoric asserts that this public is the very seat of sovereignty. . . . (There are) two things needed in a democracy: articulate and knowledgeable publics, and political leaders who if not men of reason are at least reasonably responsible to such knowledgeable publics as exist. Only where publics and leaders are responsive and responsible, are human affairs in democratic order, and only where knowledge has public relevance is this order possible. Only when mind has an autonomous basis, independent of power, but powerfully related to it, can it exert its force in the shaping of human affairs. Such a position is democratically possible only when there exists a free and knowledgeable public to which men of knowledge may address themselves, and to which men of power are truly responsible. Such a public and such men—either of power or of knowledge—do not now prevail, and accordingly, knowledge does not now have democratic relevance in America."

These words, written by the late C. Wright Mills, ten years ago, are prophetically and painfully apt today. This National Teach-In is an effort to reestablish the relevance of knowledge and open public debate in the determination of government action.

This confrontation has already been described as the largest meeting between the government and its supporters on the one hand, and its critics and opponents on the other, in the history of our country. It is perhaps the most significant political gathering of American intellectuals since the Constitutional Convention.

It is, however, only a beginning. Funds are needed to continue, enlarge and energize public debate. The single most important task now before the Inter-university Committee for Public Hearings on Vietnam is to edit, print and distribute the proceedings of the confrontation, speeches and seminars. This is an expensive job, but a necessary and important one. Please contribute.

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Inter-university Committee for Public Hearings on Vietnam.  
Post Office Box 1383, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48106

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help defray the follow-up costs of the National Teach-in.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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